TPL 5392
Not in copy
150
06

MONTREAL, 23rd *April*, 1849.

SIR,

In compliance with instructions received from the Executive Committee of the Branch of the BRITISH AMERICAN LEAGUE *now formed in this City, I beg leave to call your attention to the Address issued by them, a copy of which is herewith transmitted, and to invite your co-operation and aid in forming a similar Society in your own neighbourhood, that an early meeting of Delegates may be held, in such place as shall hereafter be determined on by the majority of such Associations as may be formed.*

You will also receive herewith a copy of the Rules adopted for the government of the Montreal Branch of the League, which may possibly be of assistance to you.

I am at the same time instructed to request a reply at your earliest possible convenience, with such information as you can supply, relative to the probability of forming such a Branch, and the numbers that may be expected to join.

I need scarcely press upon your attention the necessity of prompt and energetic action, in the present exigencies of the Province.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

W. GORDON MACK,
Corresponding Secretary.

OFFICE-BEARERS

OF THE

MONTREAL BRANCH

OF THE

BRITISH AMERICAN LEAGUE.

President.

HONORABLE GEORGE MOFFATT.

Vice-Presidents.

HARRISON STEPHENS,
THOMAS WILSON,
F. G. JOHNSON,
D. GORRIE.

Corresponding Secretary.

W. GORDON MACK.

Recording Secretary.

J. H. ISAACSON.

Treasurer.

H. E. MONTGOMERIE.

Executive Committee.

J. G. SIMS,
JOHN ORR,
ARCH. MACFARLANE,
JOHN JONES,
JOHN ESDAILE,
J. G. MACKENZIE,
JAMES MATHEWSON,
WILLIAM SPIER,
JOHN SMITH.

ADDRESS

TO

THE INHABITANTS OF CANADA.

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN :—

It has been deemed by those who now address you, that the present is a fitting time to ascertain public opinion upon many important subjects, intimately connected with the social, commercial, and political welfare of the inhabitants of this Province.

These subjects are neither of transient interest nor of mere local importance. They relate to the very existence of the Colony itself; they concern the character of the nation to which we belong; and, as they are viewed and acted upon by the men of the present day, will affect the happiness and the fate of their posterity.

That commercial distress and general depression in every department of industry, exist throughout the Province, to an extent unparalleled in the previous existence of the Colony, is admitted by all men of unbiassed judgment and adequate opportunities of observation, by commercial men of the greatest experience, and political economists of every shade of opinion; who, while they all bear concurrent testimony to the truth of this statement, as a fact of which all alike must feel the mournful weight, differ nevertheless, to some extent, from each other, as to the immediate causes from which this result has flowed, and the prospective measures most likely to afford relief.

It is neither necessary nor proper for us at this time to pronounce an opinion upon causes, with respect to which many intelligent and experienced minds are in conflict with each other, or upon remedies requiring more general concurrence and authority, than of necessity belong to the limited sphere of duty now allotted to us. The discussion of these subjects will properly belong to the people of Canada. The duty of the Association which now addresses you, is of a preliminary nature merely. It is for us to point out the exigency of the time; for you to consider the causes from which that exigency has arisen, and to suggest the remedies best calculated to obtain relief. To *anticipate* public opinion upon matters of such deep and general interest, would be presumptuous and unwarrantable; to *invite* it, we hold to be no less our duty than our right. Many thoughtful and honest minds have been, latterly, applied to the consideration of the state of this Province.—They are the minds of men interested in its welfare, to the extent of all they possess in the world, or hope to transmit to their children; of men belonging to the most widely distributed race on the face of the globe, and speaking the prevailing language of this continent and of the Empire; who desire the prosperity of Canada, and with it the prosperity of the nation of which it forms a part; children of a monarchy, too magnanimous to proscribe, too great to be unjust; inhabitants of a Province ceded to England at the termination of a long and glorious struggle, aspiring to a career of virtuous emulation with the other dependencies of the Crown, and determined to be unchecked by the narrow jealousy of a peculiar internal and exclusive nationality, which, though entitled to perfect equality with the

race of the Empire, is deserving of no predominance as a distinct source of political power.

At a meeting of gentlemen, impressed with the importance of ascertaining public opinion upon the general interests of the Province, at this momentous crisis in its history, it has been considered necessary only to invite your attention to the general reasons of the present movement; to assume no right of suggesting remedial measures; to arrogate no power of binding you by our opinions; but, leaving to yourselves the discussion of causes, and the adoption of means of relief, to shew merely the necessity of present action, and recommend what appear to us to be the best means of promoting regular enquiry, and obtaining ultimate redress.

Besides the commercial and industrial depression now weighing upon our community, evils of a social and political character exist among us to an extent unknown in any other portion of the British dominions.

Without descending to enumerate subjects which are confined to the narrow arena of party strife, it is sufficiently evident that our political system requires modification and improvement.

The diversity of national origin, in itself so potent an impediment to progress; its bearing and influence upon the general interests of the Colony, by the mere expedient of junction, apart from principle;—the system of representation; the tenure of lands in the Lower Province; the composition of the Legislative Council, and many other topics of far too great importance to be approached without caution, or touched without dispassionate enquiry by the people at large; all point to the necessity of concentrating and asserting Public Opinion upon such matters. And if these, and other weighty topics, partaking, as they do more or less, of a local character merely, were insufficient to arouse the public mind and awaken the public voice of Canada, there still remains one subject which is not limited in its influence to the local boundaries of the Province, which affects the honor of the British Crown, and the character of the British nation, and which, at this very hour, bows down the heads of the desponding, and cheers the narrow hearts of the disaffected, by the possibility of impending punishment for the duty of allegiance.

It is evident, from the known character of our race, that patient submission to any ascendancy founded on feelings of nationality alone, and not actuated by any generous or progressive principle, never has been, and never will be, for any length of time endured by Britons. It is equally apparent that whatever may be the energy or determination of the Anglo-Saxon race inhabiting this Colony, it has hitherto been diluted and weakened by the absence of all systematic combination, and by the wasteful expenditure, in unavailing individual efforts, of time and talents, which, if concentrated and applied in a proper manner, would be fitted to attain the noblest ends.

The means, therefore, which we would respectfully suggest of subjecting the grievances of the people to regular discussion and ultimate redress, are simple, natural, and obvious. They are the means by which, in other countries, all that is great, enduring, and admirable, has been attained; before which, evils, the most deep rooted, and abuses the most powerful, have invariably yielded; and without

whose agency it is perhaps not too much to assert that no public object of dignity or importance can, in the present day, be reached.

These means, so vast in attainment, so powerful in agency, and yet so simple in contrivance, are expressible in a single word: and that word is—ORGANIZATION.

Under the strongest conviction of the necessity of such a step, an Association has been formed in this City, of a provisional and preliminary character, under the name of the BRITISH AMERICAN LEAGUE. Under the view which has been taken of its duties, by those already enrolled as members of this Association, we exhort the inhabitants of this Province, in its different localities, to the formation of Societies, for the purpose of promoting discussion of the great questions now agitating the Province.

We recommend the election of Delegates by each Society, to attend a Convention at such time and place as shall be, by a majority of such Societies, determined on.

That Societies numbering 100 members and upwards shall be entitled to elect one Delegate; 300 and upwards, two Delegates; 600 and upwards, three Delegates; and 1000 and upwards, four Delegates.

That at such Convention a General Association shall be formed, and called by such name as may then be determined upon.

That such General Association shall consist of the Societies then formed, and those which may be formed thereafter.

That the Societies so united shall be divided into a Central and Assistant Societies, in correspondence with it at the various places where they may be formed.

That it shall be the duty of such Convention, by a majority of its members, to decide upon and publish a declaration of their opinions upon the commercial and political questions of the day, and it shall be the duty of such Societies, both Central and Assistant, to aid in carrying out the views of the Convention, by all practicable and lawful means.

Upon this general basis, allowing of course for modification of detail, it is hoped that something like unity of action may be attained by the inhabitants of this Province, upon matters affecting not only their most material and immediate interests, but also the interests and the honour of the great nation with which we are connected.

To maintain that connection inviolate, has ever been, and still is, the ardent wish of every member of the League. We devoutly hope that no measure of injustice may ever be inflicted—no power may ever be abused—to the extent of provoking reflecting men to the contemplation of an alliance with a foreign power; and if there be, as some have said, a time when all colonies must, in the course of human events, throw off their dependence on the Parent State, and if in our generation that time should be destined to arrive, we predict that, *if true to ourselves, it will not come* until no British hands remain able to hoist the flag of England on the rock of Quebec, and no British voices survive able to shout, "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!"

G. MOFFATT, President.
W. GORDON MACK, Corresponding Secretary.
JOHN HELDER ISAACSON, Recording Secretary.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF

THE MONTREAL BRANCH

OF

THE BRITISH AMERICAN LEAGUE.

RULE I.

The name of this Association shall be, provisionally, "THE BRITISH AMERICAN LEAGUE."

RULE II.

The object of the League shall be the maintenance and promotion, by all constitutional means, of the general interests of the Province.

RULE III.

Any person signing the Register, and paying the annual subscription of 2s. 6d., shall be a member of the League.

RULE IV.

The League shall meet on the second Wednesday of each month, in such place, and at such hour, as the Executive Committee may from time to time appoint.

RULE V.

The Annual Meeting of the League, for the election of Officers, and the transaction of other business, shall be held on the second Wednesday of August.

RULE VI.

Special Meetings of the League shall be held whenever summoned by the President; and he shall be bound to issue such summons, on the written application of any twenty or more members, stating the special business in question.

RULE VII.

Every member, on paying his subscription, shall be furnished with a ticket of membership; and no person who has not received such ticket shall be admitted to any of the meetings of the League.

RULE VIII.

The Officers of the League shall be elected annually by ballot, and shall consist of a President, four Vice-Presidents, a Corresponding Secretary, a Recording Secretary and a Treasurer.

RULE IX.

These Officers, together with nine other members to be chosen at the same time, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the League.

RULE X.

The President shall preside at the meetings of the League, or of the Executive Committee, and preserve order therein ; in either case he shall only be entitled to a casting vote.

RULE XI.

The Senior Vice-President shall perform all the duties of the President, during the absence or illness of that Officer.

RULE XII.

The Corresponding Secretary shall, under the superintendence of the Executive Committee, conduct the correspondence of the League, of which he shall keep a record.

RULE XIII.

The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the transactions of the League, and of the Executive Committee.

RULE XIV.

The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of the funds of the League; he shall pay all drafts drawn on him by the President and countersigned by the Recording Secretary, and none other; and shall keep a regular account of the financial concerns of the League.

RULE XV.

The Executive Committee shall have full power to superintend the correspondence of the League, to appropriate its funds, and generally to conduct the affairs thereof, in accordance with these Rules.

RULE XVI.

The Executive Committee shall meet weekly, on such evenings and under such regulations as they may from time to time prescribe, and shall also meet at other times when specially summoned by the President; at all Meetings of the Executive Committee, seven shall form a quorum.

RULE XVII.

On the occurrence of any vacancy in the Executive Committee, the same shall be filled at the next Monthly Meeting of the League, by the election of a member to serve until the next Annual Election.

RULE XVIII.

No alteration shall be made in these Rules unless at a General Meeting of the League, after notice of the intended motion at the General Meeting immediately preceding; nor shall such alteration be considered as carried, unless assented to by at least two thirds of the members present.